



HALEY BARBOUR
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GOVERNOR BARBOUR DEMONSTRATES NEW EMERGENCY RADIO SYSTEM FOR FIRST TIME

GULFPORT, Mississippi – Governor Haley Barbour today conducted the first public demonstration of a new wireless emergency communications network designed to allow officials and first responders to communicate quickly and effectively in times of crisis.

In a demonstration staged from the emergency operations center at the National Guard Headquarters in Gulfport, which would serve as the state's forward operations center during an actual Gulf Coast emergency, Governor Barbour used the new Mississippi Wireless Integrated Network (MSWIN) for the first time. He connected with agents of the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources, who were on duty in the Gulf of Mexico; the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency and Mississippi Department of Public Safety about 160 miles to the north in Jackson; and the Jackson County Emergency Operations Center about 40 miles to the east in Pascagoula.

"Four years ago today, we quickly discovered that Hurricane Katrina had obliterated communications systems not only along the Gulf Coast but also far inland. First responders were unable to talk to each other except face-to-face, which was disastrous in and of itself as everyone was trying to get help to people who needed it immediately," Governor Barbour said.

"Today, I am pleased to report to the people of Mississippi, we are developing a reliable, sustainable new system designed to vastly improve the ability of law enforcement and emergency personnel to share information during natural disasters like Hurricane Katrina and other emergencies," Governor Barbour said.



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"The bottom line is MSWIN will save lives and provide critical communications to state agencies and local first responders."

So far, the system has been built out from the Coast to Jackson, with work continuing to complete it statewide.

The Governor, who had made development of such a system a priority, noted that the demonstration coincided with the fourth anniversary of Hurricane Katrina.

MSWIN representatives utilized hand-held units that enabled them, with the simple turn of a knob, to speak to the various personnel. In addition to the mobile hand-held units and those that will be installed in vehicles, the MSWIN network includes a Master Site on Wheels (SOW) staged in Jackson and three mobile SOWS that can be dispatched anywhere in the state to establish or enhance radio communications in emergencies or special events.

Chris Epps, chairman of the state Wireless Communication Commission, said, "Hurricane season is in full throttle right now and it is vital that our emergency personnel have the ability to communicate with each other as they courageously put their lives on the line. Phase I is now in place and functional today in an emergency."

At Governor Barbour's request, the Mississippi Legislature recognized the benefits of MSWIN and passed legislation approving the network and initial funding. Currently the contracted \$162 million implementation cost of MSWIN has been fully funded through both state and federal appropriations. The WCC is working with the Mississippi Legislature on funding for on-going operations and maintenance of MSWIN.

The state selected Motorola as the vendor for the project, and the contract was executed in June 2007. Construction is planned in three phases. The recently completed Phase 1 covers the lower third of the state and includes a total of 44 tower sites.

"MSWIN is roughly 18 months ahead of schedule and on budget," said Bill Roach, executive officer of the Wireless Communication Commission. "We realize the urgent need for this system in our state and have worked diligently to get the network up and operating, while at the same time remaining cognizant of the budget."



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"With the completion of Phase 1, MSWIN is already providing the state of Mississippi with a state-of-the-art interoperable communication system that is helping first responders communicate on a daily basis and keeping them prepared for a large-scale emergency," said Bob Wartmann, Motorola vice president, State and Local Government Business. "Motorola has or is in the process of implementing statewide communications networks in more than 30 states. MSWIN is another example of Motorola providing the most advanced technology that will help state and local agencies throughout Mississippi close the gaps in radio coverage and help promote increased collaboration with federal, county and local agencies. Motorola looks forward to continuing to work with the state of Mississippi to complete this important communications project that will help increase the safety and security of the people of Mississippi."

Phase II, primarily central Mississippi, will include 52 sites. Phase III, the upper third of the state, will include 47 sites.

Today's demonstration follows a recent pilot program in which law enforcement officials in five Mississippi counties field tested the network. Using equipment provided by the vendor, 30 various agencies in Perry, George, Pearl River, Stone and Wayne counties utilized the network over a 30-day period.

Follow-up evaluations show that 27 of the 30 said the system performed either excellent or very good, and three felt the coverage was good and met expectations. As for voice quality, 93 percent graded it excellent or very good, while the remaining seven percent graded it as good.

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